

Summerhill Academy

Plummer's Hill, St George, Bristol BS5 7JU

Inspection dates

11–12 April 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Until recently, pupils' attainment and rates of progress have been much lower than those of other pupils nationally with similar starting points. Outcomes have improved this academic year but are not yet good.
- Current leaders have a secure understanding of the areas requiring further development. However, a number of systems implemented by the new principal are too recent to demonstrate significant impact. Leaders' improvement plans lack precision and are not sufficiently focused on the impact their actions are having on pupils' outcomes.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable. Teachers do not routinely use their knowledge of what pupils can already do to inform their planning. This results in activities which do not meet pupils' needs, especially for the most able pupils.
- Some members of staff have gaps in their subject knowledge, as well as their understanding of national curriculum expectations for the year group they teach. As a result, their teaching is not sufficiently focused on the knowledge and skills pupils require to reach the expectations for their age.
- Strategies for supporting disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are not implemented consistently by class teachers.
- Although improving, pupils' behaviour during lessons is not consistently good across the school.
- While the majority of parents and carers are positive about recent changes in the school's leadership, a number still have concerns about the level of challenge their children receive.

The school has the following strengths

- The school's leadership and, consequently, its capacity for further improvement have now been secured.
- The new principal, who took up post in January 2018, has quickly acquired an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Together with other senior leaders and an executive principal from the Cabot Learning Federation, she is driving improvement at a rapid pace.
- The curriculum provides pupils with engaging opportunities to develop their knowledge and apply their skills across a range of subjects.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff know their pupils well and intervene swiftly to address barriers to pupils' learning.
- Pupils are polite, well mannered and welcoming to visitors. Their conduct around the school and at lunchtimes and breaktimes is good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and progress rates at the end of key stage 2 so that they are at least in line with those of other pupils nationally from similar starting points.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment information to plan activities which build upon pupils' prior learning
 - teachers have an in-depth understanding of the national curriculum expectations for the year group they teach and then use this knowledge to focus their planning on raising the proportion of pupils working at the expected and higher standards
 - teachers make effective use of the strategies that leaders provide for them in order to more precisely meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - best practice in the school is used as an example to develop teachers' skills and increase consistency.
- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that development planning focuses precisely on the impact actions are to have on raising pupils' outcomes
 - embedding newly implemented systems so that they have a sustained impact on pupils' outcomes
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they use assessment information to measure the impact of their actions
 - continuing to develop systems for communication with parents so that they are kept informed of the school's improvement journey and the progress their children are making.
- Ensure that pupils' learning behaviours are positive in classes across the school by:
 - further raising teachers' expectations for the standards of pupils' behaviour
 - monitoring the consistency of the implementation of the school's behaviour policy.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the school has had two different principals. This period of unsettled leadership, combined with historical weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, has led to a decline in pupils' progress and attainment at the end of Year 6.
- Over time, leaders have not had a secure understanding of developments in teaching and learning. They have not kept teachers up to date with the raised demands of the national curriculum and, consequently, teachers' expectations of pupils have been too low. Similarly, teachers have not had a secure knowledge of the mastery curriculum and how this can be used to deepen pupils' learning. This has limited pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics.
- The newly appointed principal has quickly acquired a secure and in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and areas that require improvement. She is passionate, ambitious and aspirational for the school. She has high expectations and a resolute determination to make the school as good as it can possibly be. The school's ethos of 'Inspire to Aspire' is understood by staff and pupils alike. This is leading to improvements in the quality of teaching, standards of behaviour and, in turn, pupils' outcomes.
- The Cabot Learning Federation (CLF) is providing leaders with effective levels of support and challenge. They recognised the decline in pupils' outcomes and, with the appointment of the new principal, have now secured stable leadership for the school. Specific support is being provided by an executive principal who has a clear understanding of the school's needs. Additionally, the CLF has put in place a new chair of the academy council. He is aspirational for the school and has a pragmatic view of the work that needs to be done. These changes all enhance the school's capacity for sustained improvement. However, many new initiatives are too recent to show any significant impact.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are detailed and, as a result of an accurate evaluation of the school's position, focused on the appropriate areas. However, the criteria by which the success of leaders' actions is to be measured are not focused on the impact they will have on pupils' outcomes. Instead, they focus on planned changes in provision and what teachers and pupils will do differently. Additionally, measures for success lack precision. Therefore, councillors are not able to hold leaders to account with a sufficient level of rigour.
- The principal and other senior leaders have a secure understanding of teaching and learning. They recognise what constitutes effective teaching and can accurately pinpoint where practice is less strong. Leaders are using this information to raise the quality of teaching and learning. However, observations of pupils' learning and evaluations of the work in their books demonstrate that the quality of teaching and learning remains variable across the school and is not yet consistently good.
- The principal has high expectations of staff. Senior leaders have refined the systems for managing teachers' performance. Objectives now focus on the impact teachers are having on pupils' progress from attainment at the end of key stage 1. This has raised

expectations and levels of accountability. However, leaders have not yet been able to measure the impact this approach is having on pupils' outcomes.

- Senior leaders are providing middle leaders with effective support. This is enabling middle leaders to monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects with more confidence. The leaders for mathematics and English are able to articulate the changes they are making in their subjects and the rationale behind these. However, they are not yet secure in using assessment information to measure the impact of their actions.
- Leaders are making effective use of the additional funding they receive for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. The leaders with specific responsibility for these pupils have a detailed understanding of the barriers pupils face in their learning. As a result, these pupils are making gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. However, leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning has shown that strategies put in place for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are not being implemented consistently across the school. This is limiting the progress that these pupils make.
- Leaders are making good use of the sport premium funding in order to raise the quality of teaching in physical education lessons. Leaders have bought in external coaches to provide pupils with high-quality teaching which focuses on skills as well as tactics. Teachers work along alongside coaches to develop their own expertise, for example in the teaching of tennis and dance.
- The school's curriculum provides pupils with exciting opportunities to develop their understanding across a range of subjects. Pupils say that they enjoy the 'wow' experiences that launch their enquiry topics, for example trips to Stonehenge and the Swindon Steam Museum. Pupils also appreciate the opportunities to share learning with their parents, for example by means of an art gallery and Egyptian Museum to which parents were invited. Leaders are now exploring ways to bring about greater levels of consistency in how pupils' work in subjects across the curriculum is captured and celebrated.
- Leaders actively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils generally have a secure understanding of British values, for example democracy and tolerance of people's differences.
- Leaders are working to strengthen links with the wider community, including the infant school which shares the same site. Plans are in place for joint projects between the schools. For example, more opportunities to discuss progress and attainment between Year 2 and Year 3 teachers have aided the transition of pupils into Year 3.
- The majority of parents spoken with during the inspection were positive about the school. They particularly recognise the impact of the new principal and describe a change in culture this academic year. One parent reflected the view of many parents when she commented: 'The new principal has already addressed a lot of issues and has made some great changes. The mood of parents has lifted and is very positive towards her. The staff are also very positive towards her and seem buoyed by the change.' However, a quarter of parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, expressed concerns about the level of challenge their children receive. A similar proportion said that they would not recommend the school to other parents. Leaders and councillors recognise that more work needs to be done around parental

engagement and communication.

Governance of the school

- Strategic governance of the school is provided by the board and officers of the CLF. They have a secure understanding of the school and provide effective challenge and support for school leaders. The CLF holds leaders to account with sufficient levels of rigour, and the introduction of regular academy review meetings has, this year, added additional challenge.
- As a result of a decline in standards, the CLF has made changes to school leadership, including the appointment of a new principal and a new chair of the academy council. Inspection activities indicate that these are positive changes. However, evidence of impact is more limited due to the short length of time they have been in post.
- Local governance is provided by the academy council. Scrutiny of minutes and discussions with the chair and vice-chair of the council indicate that they have a detailed understanding of the school. Councillors use well-planned questioning to hold leaders to account. They employ the services of consultants from within the CLF and beyond to validate the information leaders present to them.
- The chair of the council is aspirational for the school and is setting leaders challenging targets. For example, he has raised the school's attendance target so that it is now significantly above the national average.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils feel safe and recognise the actions that leaders take to maintain their safety. For example, pupils talk positively about the changes that the principal has made to end-of-day procedures.
- Leaders' checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school are thorough and recorded appropriately. Similar checks are made for councillors, volunteers and contractors. The lead councillor for safeguarding and a representative of the CLF regularly monitor the school's records to ensure that they are complete and in line with statutory guidance.
- Leaders ensure that training is up to date for all staff. They recognise local risks to pupils' safety and talk knowledgeably about issues such as female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation.
- Leaders work proactively with external agencies and parents to ensure the safety of the school's most vulnerable pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable across the school. Consequently, it is not yet consistently good.
- Leaders' communication of changes to the national curriculum has led to a lack of clarity and consistency in the delivery of a mastery curriculum. Additionally, until very

recently, some teachers have not had a secure understanding of the more demanding expectations for the year group in which they teach. Over time, this has led to underachievement for pupils across the school.

- The principal, supported by other leaders and the executive principal, has quickly identified the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. She has implemented rapid improvement plans to address these deficiencies. This has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- The quality of teaching and learning is not yet consistent across different classes and year groups. Where teaching is strongest, teachers use questioning to skilfully explore pupils' understanding and deepen their learning. They provide pupils with clear instructions and model their expectations so that pupils know how to succeed. In these cases, teachers display strong subject knowledge so they can address pupils' misconceptions and adapt their teaching accordingly.
- Teachers do not routinely use their knowledge of pupils' prior learning to inform their planning. Consequently, the activities they provide for pupils are not sufficiently matched to their needs. At times, this results in pupils with lower attainment finding tasks too difficult. However, mostly this leads to teachers providing pupils with work that lacks the appropriate level of challenge. Pupils told inspectors that they often find work too easy. This is slowing progress and, in particular, limiting the proportion of pupils working at the higher standards.
- Teachers plan activities which develop pupils' fluency. Once completed, pupils are then given opportunities to apply their skills in a range of contexts. These tasks are designed to deepen pupils' understanding and develop their problem-solving skills. Although this is, in many cases, proving effective at enabling pupils to achieve the expectations for their age, pupils often do not have sufficient time to move on to the more demanding tasks. This is limiting the progress that pupils make towards achieving the higher standards.
- The teaching of writing lacks precision. Learning objectives are not focused on developing the skills that pupils are expected to have by the end of each year group. This means that although pupils' books demonstrate that they are making progress in their writing, this is not leading to greater proportions of pupils working at either the expected standards or at greater depth. Additionally, teachers do not routinely provide pupils with opportunities to develop their writing skills across a range of subjects.
- The teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation is variable across the school. In Year 3, there is a considerable focus on teaching the basic skills, but there are fewer opportunities for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing. In contrast, Year 6 pupils receive little input on developing their use of grammar and punctuation to support their writing. As a result, a large proportion of Year 6 pupils have a level of knowledge, skills and understanding below that expected for their age.
- Pupils are keen readers and talk positively about books. They read with good levels of clarity, fluency and comprehension. Adults who listen to pupils read have good subject knowledge, for example in the teaching of phonics in Year 3. They ask probing questions to explore pupils' understanding of the text and key vocabulary. Newly acquired resources for guided reading sessions have raised levels of pupils' engagement as well as pupils' abilities to talk about their reading.

- Leaders have ensured that a broad and exciting curriculum is developing pupils' understanding and skills across a range of subjects. Topic work is taught through an enquiry-based approach. Where teaching is most effective, pupils are inquisitive learners. Teachers use skilful questioning and well-planned activities which enable pupils to explore and deepen their understanding. However, in a number of classes, teachers overly direct learning and this limits opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and knowledge.
- In small-group activities and one-to-one interventions, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because teaching in these sessions is focused precisely on pupils' needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders know their pupils well. They understand pupils' vulnerabilities and are proactive in implementing strategies to remove the barriers that pupils face in their learning.
- Staff have developed strong relationships with pupils and these contribute to pupils feeling safe in school. Pupils say that bullying does happen but is rare. They are confident that should they have any concerns, they can talk to a trusted adult and the problem will be dealt with effectively. A proportion of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, expressed concerns about bullying in the school. However, this view was not supported by inspection evidence or by conversations with pupils.
- Leaders understand the importance of supporting pupils' social, emotional and mental health. They regularly check the health needs of pupils and provide individualised interventions where this is required. Pupils talk positively about this work and how it supports their learning.
- Pupils have an age-appropriate knowledge of e-safety and how to stay safe online. They understand that should they have any concerns, they can talk to a trusted adult either in school or at home. Pupils talk positively about the sessions they have had with the NSPCC and what this has taught them about their own personal safety.
- Pupils play an active part in their community. For example, they regularly participate in the St George lantern parade and, this year, showed off their art and design skills with lanterns representing a 'flamboyance of flamingos'.
- The school council plays an influential role in designing school policy. Members are proud of the impact that they have both within the school and wider afield. For example, they have been instrumental in improving pupil safety. Recent initiatives have included new procedures for the safe use of staircases, as well as liaising with police officers on improving parking around the school and promoting the 'twenty is plenty' speed campaign.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The standard of pupils' behaviour in lessons is variable. In some classes, a minority of pupils are not focused on their learning and this leads to examples of low-level disruption. This is especially the case when learning activities do not challenge or engage pupils. This weaker behaviour is having a detrimental effect on learning in these classes.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They are welcoming to visitors and proud of their school. Their conduct around the school and at lunchtimes and breaktimes is good. Pupils make good use of playground equipment including the 'playpod'. Older pupils take their responsibilities as play leaders seriously and use their roles to involve the younger pupils in their play.
- Pupils' attendance continues to be broadly in line with the national average. This is the overall case for pupils in the school, as well as for specific groups of pupils. Leaders and councillors have high aspirations for pupils' attendance and have set targets for it to rise above national and local comparators. Leaders work proactively with pupils and their families to minimise persistent absence and get these pupils back into school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Instabilities in the leadership of the school, as well as weaknesses in the quality of teaching, have resulted in a decline in standards since the previous inspection. In 2016 and 2017, published assessment information for pupils at the end of Year 6 showed that there was significant underachievement for pupils when compared to their attainment at the end of Year 2. This was the case for reading, writing and mathematics.
- However, the school's assessment information for pupils currently in Year 6 shows that a greater proportion of these pupils are on track to reach the expectations for their age. The proportion of pupils working at the higher standards is also set to be higher this year.
- Assessment information for current pupils shows that rates of progress have increased during this academic year. The majority of pupils are now making the progress expected of them from their starting points in Year 3. This information is supported by the work seen in pupils' books.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities make progress which is at least comparable to their peers. In a number of cases, these pupils make stronger progress as a result of the precise teaching they receive through targeted interventions.
- Outcomes in subjects other than in English and mathematics are variable due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. When teaching is strongest, pupils develop knowledge and enquiry skills, as well as the ability to think deeply and reflect upon their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	138658
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	10047000

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	342
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of Academy Council	Tony Cherry
Principal	Rebecca Curtis
Telephone number	0117 903 0347
Website	www.summerhillacademy.org.uk/
Email address	info@sa.cabot.ac.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 May 2014

Information about this school

- Summerhill Academy is a larger than average-sized junior school. There are 12 classes – three per year group.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a number of changes in the leadership of the school. In this time, there have been four different principals, including an acting principal for the autumn term of 2017. The new substantive principal took up post in January 2018.
- The school is a part of the Cabot Learning Federation. This is a multi-academy trust consisting of 15 academies in Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Weston-super-Mare and Bath. The newly appointed principal is being supported by an executive principal from within the trust.
- Local governance is provided by the academy council. The current chair joined the council in November 2017.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnicities. The proportion who speak English as an

additional language is well above the national average.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is well below the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms in order to observe pupils' learning. A number of these visits were carried out jointly with the principal, executive principal and other senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with school leaders, staff, members of the academy council, including the chair of the council, and representatives from the Cabot Learning Federation. Inspectors also took into account responses to questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.
- Inspectors looked at the school's evaluation of its own performance, its improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of meetings of the academy council. They also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to seek their views and listened to a selection of them read.
- Inspectors took account of 52 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including a number of free-text responses. They also spoke with a number of parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Jonathan Dyer, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Heather Barraclough	Ofsted Inspector
Jan Isaac	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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